THE

Seaman's Confidence.

A Dialogue between

Two Seamen after a Storm.

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A

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Two Seamen after a Storm.

Jack WHAT cheer, ſhipmate? how did you weather the ſtorm laſt night?

Tom. Truly I never was in ſuch a taking in my life, as when the ſhip made ſo much water in her hold, in ſpite of all hands at the pumps; I thought we ſhould every man of us go to *Davy Jones's Locker.*

Jack. But, though you ſpeak ſo jocoſely about death now, had you not more ſerious thoughts of it, when it ſeemed to ſtare you in the face laſt night?

Tom. Why, Jack, I muſt confeſs I had ſome dreadful thoughts about going to hell; and if I had been alone, I ſhould have ſaid my prayers.—but pray how did you feel?

Jack. Quite happy, and reſigend to whatever might befal me.

Tom. Happy in a ſtorm! Why I have been many years at ſea, but never before heard of a man being happy in a ſtorm—pray what makes you happier than other people?

Jack. The Bible, Tom; that ſhews me the way to true happineſs and ſolid peace, and tells me that God is a preſent help in time of trouble.

Tom I always thought it a book to make one melancholy.

Jack. That's a great miſtake, Tom; on the contrary, it affords every motive to true cheerfulneſs, and only forbids falſe pleaſures and fooliſh joys, which are indeed hurtful as well as ſinful.

Tom Then, why it is laughed at by the wiſe ones, and by all hearty fellows, ſo that you know it is even a wonder to ſee a Bible among a whole ſhip's company?

Jack. Becauſe our hearts are ſo depraved by ſin, that we hate God, and the things of God We ſeem willing to make the port of heaven, but neglect the *chart* which ſhould direct our coaſt. We are like a man ſleeping at the maſt head, not knowing but the firſt guſt of wind may launch him into the deep.

Tom I certainly ſometimes think of death, and wiſh to go to heaven; but what *chart* is that you talk of?

Jack. Our bodies are like ſhips richly freighted; the ſoul is a cargo of greater value than the whole world; "for what would it profit a man to gain the whole world and loſe his own ſoul?" (Matt xvi 26) We are expoſed to ſuch violent ſtorms in ſailing over the ocean of life, that numbers daily founder, and make ſhipwreck both of body and ſoul. to prevent this, however, the *owner* has given us the Bible, as our *chart* in which the track to the port of Heaven is plainly marked—every rock, ſhoal, or quickſand diſtinctly ſhewn—and the winds which blow in certain directions at particular ſeaſons pointed out.

Tom. Pray who is the *owner* you ſpeak of?

Jack. He is God Almighty, who made the ſea and the dry land; he created man in his own image, and man's ſupreme happineſs conſiſted in fellowſhip with his Maker; but the firſt man made ſhipwreck of this happy ſtate by ſinning againſt God, and brought ſin and miſery on all his race. So this *chart* ſays, "all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God" (Romans) iii 23.) "The *wages* of ſin is death," (Rom. vi, 23. not only the death of the body; but if we live and die in the love of ſin, we are ſubject to eternal death, which is

baniſhment of our ſouls from God, to dwell for ever in hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix 44.)

Tom. Does your Bible tell us how to eſcape this?

Jack. Not only ſo, but it ſhews us the way to everlaſting happineſs. Having told us of our natural ſtate as ſinners, it reveals a Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt, the ever-bleſſed Son of God, who took upon him our nature, that he might become a ſuitable Saviour for us: he fulfilled the law of God in our ſtead, and died on the croſs to make atonement for our ſins.

Tom Explain yourſelf, Jack, as I don't underſtand any thing about religion

Jack. Suppoſe, Tom, when we ſailed from London, you had taken out goods as a venture, and, to ſecure the man that gave you credit, had given him your bond: and ſuppoſe, when we arrive at our port, you ſell the goods, but inſtead of paying your creditor, ſquander away the money. Now to prevent his lodging you in goal as he juſtly might; if, I becoming your ſurety, were to pay the money, and cancel the bond, would the creditor have any claim on you?

Tom. Certainly not; he would be as well ſatisfied as if I had paid it

Jack. So it is with divine things; we are not only debtors to God's juſt law, but highly criminal, and guilty of mutiny and rebellion againſt him: thus we are *all* expoſed to his juſt ſentence of condemnation: for the Bible ſays, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) But Jeſus Chriſt became our ſurety and paid the dreadful debt, by "being made a curſe "for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) when "he bore our ſins in his "body on the croſs," (1 Peter ii. 24.) thus making a complete atonement for them. he ſatisfied divine juſtice; and, by a life of perfect righteouſneſs, fulfilled the law in our ſtead; therefore "all who believe in him, are

juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes." Acts xiii. 39.

Tom Are all men thus juſtified?

Jack. Alas! no; for the greater part of men deſpiſe this way of ſalvation, or, at leaſt, cares nothing about it — ſuppoſe, in the caſe I have juſt ſtated, you were obſtinately to refuſe me as your ſurety; and would rather go to priſon than be beholden to me; do you think I would afterwards releaſe you?

Tom No, ſurely.

Jack Then how can you, or any man, expect to be ſaved by a Redeemer whom you deſpiſe and reject? No, my dear Tom, we muſt come as guilty, penitent ſinners, and beg for mercy, for Chriſt's ſake, determined by *his* grace to forſake our ſins, before we can ever obtain true comfort, or advantage from his ſalvation; then, indeed, we may rejoice with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

Tom. That, I ſuppoſe, made you ſo happy in the ſtorm; but pray, why do you call the Bible your *chart?*

Jack. Becauſe as I told you, it marks out our track acroſs the ocean of this life, and points out the rocks and ſhoals which are to be avoided.

Tom And what are they?

Jack. The firſt rock is *unbelief*, which lies concealed under the ſurf of ſelf-confidence; in plain Engliſh, this means that the diſbelief of God's word, and the want of true faith, are no leſs dangerous to our ſouls, than a rock covered by the ocean is to our bodies. Another rock is *hard heartedneſs*, which means our not feeling the evil that is in ſin, eſpecially in what we call little ſins; for the beginning of ſin is like water coming in at a ſmall hole in the ſhip, which if not ſtopped will inevitably ſink her.

Tom. Well, there are ſome things that you call ſins which cannot be avoided aboard of ſhip; and I hope God will forgive thoſe faults that we commit with our ſhipmates, becauſe we only do like the reſt.

Jack. Our guilt is not leſſened by following a multitude to do evil, but is rather encreaſed by the example we ſet before others, and eſpecially boys, who naturally imitate the vices of men, though they evidently may be their ruin—We have all daily cauſe to cry to God for the pardon of our ſins as well as for his grace to enable us to forſake them; for, "unleſs we repent we muſt all periſh"

Tom. But who can forbear *ſwearing* ſometimes, eſpecially when things go croſs? And indeed we are ſo much in the habit of it, that we often don't know when we do ſwear.

Jack. Thoſe who are enabled truly to believe in Chriſt will prove that faith is not a mere opinion, but a divine principle which works by love, and produces a complete change in the heart and conduct. The grace of God thus bringeth ſalvation, "teaching us to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil world we therefore, ſhould keep a ſtrict watch againſt thoſe ſins which more eaſily beſet us, and eſpecially againſt prophaneneſs, which inſults the Divine Majeſty, defies his power and challenges his wrath, even when he has declared, "he will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain." Moſt other ſins have the allurement of ſenſual pleaſure, or ſome advantage to plead: but ſwearing is ſelling our ſouls to Satan for nought, can give no ſatisfaction, and is attended with no gain.

Tom. You are ſo ſtrict, then I ſuppoſe you would not drink a merry can of grog with your ſhipmates

Jack. If by *a merry can*, you mean drinking to exceſs, I would remind you, that God, whoſe commands are for man's good, as well as for his own glory has charged us—*Be not drunk* (Eph v 18.) Drunkenneſs is a great crime; it unfits for every ſervice, and whatever we may think of it, *no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of God.* (1 Cor. vi 10—Gal v. 21.) "Have, therefore, no fellowſhip with theſe unfruitful works of dark-

neſs; but rather reprove them for conſcience ſake."

Tom You make ſo much of a little tipling aboard a ſhip, what will you ſay to thoſe who have a girl on ſhore?

Jack. Don't jeſt with ſin, Tom. "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" He hath ſaid, *keep thyſelf pure*, 1 Tim v. 22 and the more bad examples abound, the greater need there is that we ſhould "watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation" Be not then partakers with them, who not only ſacrifice their health, money, and character, but deſtroy body and ſoul in hell, for ſuch poor ſenſual indulgences

Tom Are there any ſeamen religious beſides yourſelf Jack?

Jack. I believe there are many—the power of God's grace is ſometimes diſplayed in places, where we leaſt expect it. I was myſelf acquainted with a Negro Sailor, who in a dreadful ſtorm during the night, when he every minute expected that the ſhip would founder, enjoyed ſtrong conſolation from putting his truſt in Jeſus.

I have ſeen a letter from a ſailor on board, the Bellerophon, after the memorable battle of the Nile, in which he praiſed the Lord for preſerving him in that engagement, and declared that he had ſeen as happy days in that ſhip as ever he had ſeen in his life, adding that he had ſeveral godly companions on board, who had been of great ſervice to him.

Tom. You ſurprize me, Jack.

Jack. Theſe men not only *profeſs* to be godly, but on receiving their firſt payment of prize money, from that victory, while their ſhipmates were drowning the ſenſe of their deliverance in ſpirituous liquors, eight of them, *of their own accord*, gave half of their payment, amounting to £18 10*s*. to promote the ſpreading of the Goſpel among the Heathen, as a thank-offering to God who covered their heads in the day of battle

Tom. If I thought the Bible would do me as much good as you ſay, I would buy one: however, when I go aſhore I'll try to get one, and read it through.

Jack. You need not wait for that; I'll lend you mine; but you muſt not ſuppoſe the mere reading of it over as a hiſtory will do you any good; you muſt pray over it, that the Lord would enlighten your mind by his Holy Spirit, without which it will be as a ſealed book to you: but if you read it under his influence, you will obtain a good hope of everlaſting life, "which is an *anchor* of the ſoul, both ſure and ſteadfaſt" Heb. vi. 19

Tom. Thank you, Jack; but how can I read the Bible or pray on ſhip board?

Jack. You know Tom, where there's a will there's a way; I find many opportunities between the watches, and eſpecially on Sundays, to get into a corner below deck, and read my Bible; and as to prayer, the Lord will anſwer the man that lifts up his *heart* to him, though he cannot go on his knees. I often enjoy ſweet communion with him as I lie in my hammock

Tom. I would follow your example, but I don't know how to pray.

Jack. The diſciples aſked Jeſus to teach them to pray; and the Scripture tell us of a man that could only ſay from the heart, "God be merciful to me a ſinner," and his prayer was heard: we are there encouraged to "pour out our hearts before the Lord." Whatever we truly need for body or ſoul, we may ſimply aſk in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, who has promiſed that "Whatever we aſk of the Father, in his name, he will give it us:—"Aſk and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full." John xvi 23. 24.

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T. Cheney, Printer, Banbury.

1608/2608.